

West Hants Diverse and Inclusive Communities Planning Session

Goal

By the end of this series of meetings, we hope to have a selection of projects for the DICC to work on in 2024, each with a person who feels passionate about it as its “champion.” We want to include short term projects as well as work toward medium and long term goals. Some of these will be projects that we can do ourselves; others will involve recommendations to Council and advocacy directed toward other organizations or levels of government.

Supplies

We will prepare in advance:

A pile of half-sized Flipchart sheets, some with the tasks included in the Community Engagement Report already filled in, most blank;

A large-font form with the list of the groups and communities this committee has a mandate to include (“including, but not limited to those of African descent, Acadian, Glooscap First Nation, 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, Senior, Youth and newcomers’ communities - we will add people with disabilities and an ‘other’ category)

Enough Flipchart paper to make a very large chart on the wall

Different coloured sticky notes

Copies of the agenda

Process

Passion Projects

We will go around to each member of the committee to talk about what he or she would really like to work on. Personal passion is what, in the end, moves committee tasks forward and no one wants to sit on a committee where they already feel that their priorities are not being addressed. We will put each of these project ideas on a half-sheet of Flipchart paper, along with the name of the “champion,” and include a copy of the mandate form with the communities addressed by the project checked. These will be placed on the wall according to whether they are short term, medium term or long term.

Projects Suggested by the Community Engagement Report

The tasks that came from the Community Engagement Report will already have headings on half-sheets of Flipchart paper. We will find out if there are “champions” interested in any of them and, if there are, place them in the short, medium and long term categories. If there is no interested champion, we will set them aside and consider what to do about them later in the process.

Our Project, Council’s or Wider Advocacy?

We will use coloured sticky notes to mark whether a project is something we can do ourselves, something within the mandate of Council or something that involves advocacy directed at another organization or level of government.

Priorities

The next step will involve picking a couple of projects in each category (short, medium or long term) that will be our priorities for 2024. This may be simple when we consider the passion of the “champions,” the number of communities the project would address, the impact we judge each project could have on the wider community, the degree to which we have the power to carry it out and how much time and effort it would take. We do want a short term project or two with a high possibility of relatively quick success!

If it is harder to select priorities or narrow them down, we may need to resort to a priority-setting technique such as Dotmocracy or a formal consensus process. Voting might be a possibility as well, but

doesn't work well in decisions like this because someone always "loses" and is discouraged from continuing on with the work.

The Plan

We will create a chart on the wall with columns listing the projects, "champion," timeframe and what support will be required from the committee as a whole as well as our supporting staff members.

Leftovers

We will tidy up any loose ends, like talking about what to do with projects and tasks that were set aside for lack of "champion," time or low priority as well as any issues that came up and were set aside. We should perhaps have a "parking lot," a sheet of paper for collecting issues we weren't able to deal with on the spot.

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Diverse and Inclusive Communities Committee Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2024 - 6:00 p.m.
NS Works (Community Inc) Boardroom



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1. Call to Order – The CAO meeting began at 6:03 p.m.

Attendance

Abraham Zebian, Mayor
Andrea Parker, Community Health Board Representative Advisory Member
Anne Bishop, Community Member
Shartelle Lyon, SPEC Advisory Member
Chris Burns, WHRM Employee
David Ferguson, RCMP Representative
Deanna Snair, WHRM Employee
Domenic Padula, Community Member
Jamie Patterson, Community Member
Sarah Taylor, WHRM Employee
Kevin Waters. WHRM Employee

Regrets:

Ian Shaw, Community Member
Jenna Warren, Community Member
Jessie Drysdale, WHRM Employee
Mark Phillips, CAO
Ripley Brown-Fogarty, Community Member
Sarah Brothers, Community Member
Vanessa Lake, WHRM Employee
Jim Ivey, Councillor, District 11, Alternate Council Member

Overview of the Agenda

Chair Anne Bishop reviewed the agenda. The goal at the end of the planning meetings was to identify a selection of projects the committee would like to address and move forward with beginning in 2024. Each project would have a committee member who would champion specific projects, with the assistance of other committee members.

A round table discussion was facilitated by the chair. Each committee member provided a brief biography, identified their personal passions and through this open discussion community areas or projects that were felt to be valuable were identified and prioritized to provide a baseline for

the committee to move forward and begin facilitating growth and change within the communities of West Hants.

The committee identified timelines for proposed projects. Short-term was identified as being within the first year (1 year), Medium-term was identified as 2-5 years and long term was any project outside of the 3-year range. The committee noted some projects were likely to fall within both medium and long-term goals as they may begin within the medium timeframe but were projects/goals that would be long lasting (education and awareness).

The committee also recognized the importance of identifying 2-3 projects to focus on as there may be a need to be responsive to an unexpected event or circumstance within West Hants.

Individual Passions

Kevin Waters – Passionate about Accessibility and Accessibility lead for AMANS.

Projects:

- Accessibility Plan update
- NS Anti-racism and anti-hate plan
- Anti racism charter through Recreation NS
- Disability awareness

Andrea Parker – Passionate about Community access/support for all, connectivity, inclusion and welcomeness for all.

Projects:

- Community Health Plan
- Way to have connectivity and a sense of belonging and welcomeness within West Hants.
- Welcome group for newcomers.
- Splash pad for Panuke Road.

Shartelle Lyon – Passionate about housing, transportation, diversity, inclusivity, 2SLGBTQIA+, food insecurity, safe spaces and programming for youth, community spaces.

Projects:

- Housing, transportation.
- Food insecurity.
- Safe space for youth 13-25.
- Three Mile Plains Old School house turned into a Community Hall space.

Anne Bishop – Passionate about the Diverse and Inclusive committee. This committee was essential.

Projects:

- Sees the committee as being a central hub, where discussions occur, and information is taken back out to areas within West Hants by each committee member.
- Like to see an effective committee.
- Have a central place to come together to react to incidents as they occur in the community.

Chris Burns – Passionate about West Hants and making it a better place as it is also his new home.

Projects:

- Look at endorsing Pride/Rainbow Crosswalks.
- Commemorating events/calendars that showcase individuals who make a difference in the community.

Jamie Patterson – Passionate about education (sharing awareness and developing training opportunities related to best practices for hiring processes focused on individuals with disabilities). Started a series of lunch and learns.

Projects:

- Education (will be an ongoing long-term focus).

Deanna Snair – Passionate about family, community and making a better West Hants for her children.

Projects:

- Creating educational opportunities to take back to the municipality. CAO's Office needs to be the leader for employees.

Sarah Taylor – Passionate about education and awareness.

Projects:

- Creating and providing educational awareness and opportunities, love the Lunch and Learn opportunities.
- Anti-racism and anti-hate strategy.

Abe Zebian - Passionate about “poking the bear”, making people feel uncomfortable in an effort to have a deeper conversation and provide awareness and promote individual growth, community welcomeness, inclusivity, and creating a better West Hants for everyone.

- Respect for differences week or festival that would showcase something different each day (diverse and cultural cooking, performances, language speaking sessions, etc.)
- Need to improve of initiatives and focused related to African NS month, need to improve. Banner project, look at something like that for each month of celebration for those who have made a significant change.
- Create a welcome space for all in West Hants.
- Create some type of West Hants Hall of Fame and banquet that celebrates those in West Hants who have pioneered initiatives and celebrate achievements.

Dave Ferguson – Passionate about community and establishing best practices to develop, build and maintain relationships in the community. Taylor the service to meet the needs for the community.

Projects:

- Creating and initiating different ways that RCMP can be involved to help foster relationships and improve policing in the region.
- Enhance service to the community and build relationships.

Domenic Padula – Passionate about everything that has been previously mentioned. Need to address the racism within West Hants.

Projects:

- Welcome Diversity to West Hants.
- Need programming for youth (12–19), none of the programming through Community Development addresses this need.
- Anti bullying policy not effective or enforced. (Antibullying/Racism and AV Hockey team). There needs to be zero tolerance for this behaviour. Education and conversations need to occur on the rationale on why it is not O.K. to say what is being said.
- Homelessness and Mental Health – this is not going to go away anytime soon. This demographic needs to feel welcomed and valued within the communities.
- Provide opportunities/education where individuals feel a sense of belonging for all.

The committee shared upcoming events/opportunities for community members to participate and provide feedback on initiatives to improve community services/supports that foster inclusivity and welcomeness.

- Hants Community Health Board Lunch & Learn - Community Health and Wellness initiative to mobilize and bring people in community to together to make connections.
- HCH NS Brotherhood and Sisterhood Hants Wellness team asking seeking information from people of African descent on the types of services they want to see in their region.

The committee discussed the importance of having a representative from the school sector provide insight and perspective on issues, racism and bullying occurring in and around schools and school related events/recreation and sports.

- Create a session/workshop with classes and the committee to open a dialogue and have uncomfortable discussions to facilitate awareness, education, and foster opportunities for growth within the youth of West Hants.
- There was value in having cultural awareness events in the schools.
- There was value in taking the youth out of West Hants to experience other cultures, regions and populations.

- Invite guests/speakers in to address their concerns/experiences with the committee. Have a special discussion on dealing with racism.

Anne Bishop spoke of the RAD Report and highlighted key points and areas that were worthy of the committee having a discussion. See the RAD Report for additional information.

The consensus was overall, the municipality has been very supportive. It was great to hear all the initiatives and things that the Municipality has implemented (by-laws, planning processes, supporting the Warming Centre. There was a need to address and make individuals accountable for any/all hate speech and racism. An annual festival may be a good approach, it could begin at the school level (target audience) and spill over to the community as momentum grows.

- The committee may want to reach out and work with Avon River day committee to help with their relaunch.
- There was a need for Community Centre spaces that provided access to full kitchens to host gatherings.
- There needs to be more diversity on Council. Needs to be an emphasize that anyone can run for Council.

The discussions (passions and projects) were captured and identified as short-, medium- or long-term projects.

A brief discussion occurred around a budget for action items. More discussion on this will occur at future meetings once projects have been identified.

Anne gathered the information and will compile and share the document with the committee. It was hoped that at the next meeting, the committee will look to narrow down and identify projects to move forward with.

The next meeting date will March 25th, 2024 at 6 p.m. A formal meeting invitation will be sent. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.